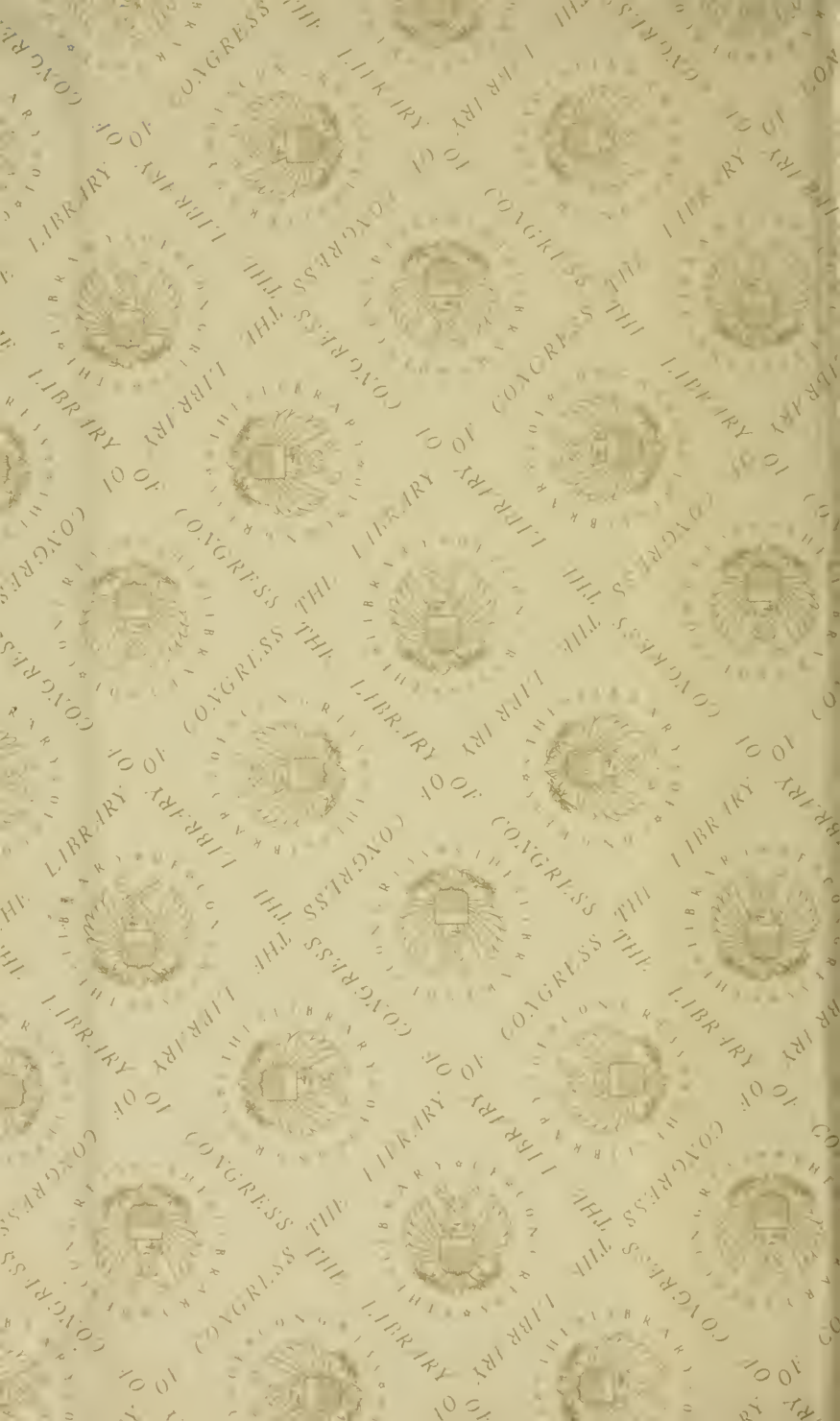


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AMERICAN

Female Education:

WHAT? AND BY WHOM?

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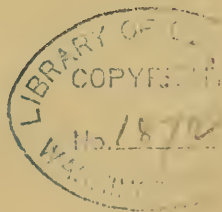
A

LECTURE

BY

Just ordered
R. W. CUSHMAN. A. M.,

PRINCIPAL OF THE MOUNT VERNON LADIES' SCHOOL, BOSTON



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P R E F A C E.

THE following lecture was delivered before the Columbian Association of Teachers, at the Smithsonian Institution, at Washington. The author was, at the time, at the head of a French and English Protestant boarding school for young ladies in that city, where he was aiming to supply to Protestant families the means of an education which should be at once ornamental and thorough, without the danger which is incurred in Roman Catholic schools. The mischief which so often results from the confidence of Protestants in the education of Nunneries, and the partiality shown by leading fashionable American families for foreign boarding schools, had long been to him a source of apprehension, and a mortification to his national pride. Perhaps some will think he has given too much indulgence to his feelings on those points in the following pages. Be that as it may, the convictions expressed as to what ought to characterize the education of the females of our country, and as to the agents to whom it should be intrusted, are still his convictions; and the subject is too important, in his estimation, to be treated with any thing less than earnestness. He therefore gives publicity to them by the publication of the lecture, in the hope that it may aid, to some extent, in the formation, the diffusion and prevalence of a healthy American sentiment on one of the most important subjects which can claim the attention of the Christian and the patriot.

6 Allston Street, Boston, *Aug.* 22, 1855.

LECTURE.

WOMAN, with man, divides the world. One half of all that makes up the sum of human interests belongs to her. Of the cares and sorrows of life she has ever had, in every state of society, her full and unenvied portion. And, however much she has been restricted in the sphere of her presence and action, or debarred from those sources of intellectual energy to which the other sex have had access,—she has ever had, and ever *will* have her full moiety of influence over the destinies of the race. And, indeed, so nearly omnipotent that influence, that it must ever remain for woman to say what man shall

be. To her the infant mind is first committed : and, for several of the most important years of life, it is under her guidance and impress almost entirely. Both the powers of the mind and the qualities of the heart are at her disposal : and, in all ordinary cases, as the twig of the nursery is bent by her plastic hand, the tree is inclined.

Nor is her influence greatly lessened when her charge is grown up beyond the nursery. With respect to her own sex, it may be generally said, that the mother's best portrait is her daughter. And, though it must be acknowledged that a mother's influence is not always successful in securing a *son* from sentiments and habits which she *condemns*; I believe that, in no instance, is any power, but that of the Almighty God, able to turn him from an injurious or vicious pursuit, which the mother *approves*. It was pronounced by the

voice of inspiration, in the case of an ancient king of Judah, to be a cause fully adequate to account for the vicious career which he pursued, that "his mother was his counsellor to do wickedly."

On the other hand, almost every man of eminent intellectual and moral worth, whose life has left a beneficial impression on the character and condition of his age, has been shown to have been indebted for his influence, in a very great measure, to the influence of woman—as mother or wife. And it will not be too much to say,—for the history of the world will bear out the assertion,—that if you would inquire, what the character of a new-born nation shall be, *you must ask it of her!* Let woman remain in the rudeness of her untutored nature, and man, her companion, will be a savage. Let her be the patroness and example of a loose and voluptuous refinement; and her

masculine associate will become the devotee of effeminate vice. But let her influence be thrown into the scale of virtue and piety, intelligence, humanity and patriotism, and her nation's happiness and glory are secure.

Now, for a considerable portion of her influence, we acknowledge her to be indebted to the endowments of her nature: but, for the *character and tendency* of that influence, she is indebted to her education.

If, then, there is on the earth a nation which ought to be deeply interested in the subject of Female Education, it is our own. Our national character is in the process of its formation. All our national institutions—nay, our very constitution itself, is in the vacillating uncertainty of an experiment. And the question, Whether it shall succeed,—whether our nation shall continue free, and become great,

and good, and wise, and happy,—must be determined, in a great measure, by the character which education shall instamp on our daughters, and wives, and mothers. Allow me, then, to improve the present occasion to speak of what I consider the REQUISITES OF AN AMERICAN FEMALE EDUCATION; and to notice some things which appear to me to call for attention and reform in the notions and practices prevalent in this country in regard to female education. What is education? What is proper to female education? What should characterize the education of the females of this country particularly?

1st. *What is education?*

Thomson tells us, it is that which “*forms* the common mind.” This is partially true; but it is less accurate and expressive than the word itself, when its etymology is attended to. Education, indeed, forms or moulds to

a certain extent. But it does more. And it does it, not for the *mind* ONLY, but for the body; for the soul; for the affections. We say it does more than *form*; it *draws forth*,—as the word implies. But this is not all: it directs the powers to which it is applied to their appropriate objects, and gives them connexions. Man, on coming into life, though the most dependent, is one of the most isolated of living things. He has—so to speak—no hands to work, no feet to walk, no tongue to talk, no mind to think, no heart to love or hate, no memory to rejoice or sorrow, and no experience to hope or fear. He is but a lump of capabilities. These capabilities are to be, like so many cords, unravelled and drawn out; and by them he is to be connected to the world, to society, to the past, to the future, to God, and to the life to come. So that, from being the most isolated,

and, therefore, the most helpless, he becomes the most connected, and therefore the most variously powerful, or capable of all creatures on earth.

In this view, the process of education begins very early. It begins with the light which visits the sense of sight. It begins with the hand of care which visits the sense of touch. It begins with the ministry of maternal love that visits the sense of taste ; and with the tones of tenderness that visit the ear. They are all so many *attractions* applied to the enwrapped faculties, drawing them forth and connecting them with the world. And the process, thus and so early begun, *goes on* ; whether by direction or by chance : and if by wise and adequate direction, it goes on till every power of body, and mind, and heart, and soul, is fully developed ; and its just and healthful connexions established.

In the broad view, there is an education for humanity; a *generic* education, appropriate to the race, as possessing a physical, an intellectual, a moral, and an immortal nature. In a narrower view, there is an education appropriate to *man*; and there is an education appropriate to *woman*, considered as created to sustain, in some respects, the same, and, in other respects, different relations. So far as the relations differ, the same education would be inappropriate; and so far as the capabilities were adjusted, by the Creator, to the intended difference of relations,—and we are not among those who doubt this,—a like education would be absurd or impossible. No training, for example, could give to men the ideas, conceptions, sensibilities, which at once ennoble and empower woman in her sphere. And, if it were possible, instead of ennobling and empowering

him, the effect would be to make him both weak and contemptible,—as the common sentiment of mankind, in both sexes, has ever pronounced effeminacy to be.

With these preliminary remarks, then, on education in general, let us turn to the consideration of what ought to be sought in the education of woman.

It is a self-evident truth, that her education should be in harmony with her nature, considered as possessing physical, intellectual, and moral faculties; and as destined to immortality. It should, furthermore, be in harmony with her sex, and her social and domestic sphere. No one, we should suppose, would consider *that* education proper and adequate which should neglect any part of her nature—either the understanding, the memory, the conscience, or the affections, or the physical struc-

ture. Taking it for granted, then, that all these departments are to be cultivated, our first enquiry is: Has woman any *distinctive* characteristics which demand a modification of the system of culture which would be appropriate to man?

1st. As to her *physical* nature.

That she possesses a *more delicate organization* than man is certain. That its proper development is a matter of more importance to herself and to society than the proper development of man, I believe, will be conceded. A badly-shapen body, for instance, as the result of the neglected or ill-directed physical education, is a greater calamity to woman than to man. It is also certain that woman is *more liable to suffer* in her physical development in the present state of society, than man. The youth of the male sex is passed more in the open air than that of woman;

the body is habited in greater freedom ; and the exercise which is allowed is more vigorous.

From all this, it is obvious that greater attention and care are required in the physical education of woman than in that of man. The latter may go on spontaneously : the former must be attended to and provided for. Dangers must be guarded against, symptoms must be watched, and timely counteractions must be applied.

It were greatly to be wished, therefore, that the sentiment of society were such that a *system* of physical activity, which should combine *utility* with exertion, could be connected with the intellectual training of female schools. If this cannot be done, the next best thing is a gymnasium, in which some portion of each day should be passed in muscular exercise in such loose and proper dress as will admit of any de-

sirable degree of activity and exertion. In cities, where space is too costly to admit of such establishments in connexion with individual schools, they should be provided for the schools in common. Where, however, they are not to be had, the skilful and careful teacher will be the more assiduous in the use of such means as are in his power.

Without further detaining you on this point let us consider,

2dly. Whether woman has any distinctive traits in her *intellectual* nature, which require a modification of the education appropriate to man.

It is generally conceded, that woman is quicker in her perceptions than man, —that she is more intuitive in her judgments, and less patient of ratiocinative processes for reaching conclusions. Some one has remarked, in illustrating this characteristic, that he

never ascended a flight of steps, that he did not find that some woman had got there before him; but the difficulty was for her to tell *how* she got there.

Now, it is the most important thing, certainly, *to be* there. In that respect she is as well off as the man. And it may be admitted that in getting there *first*, she has the advantage. But if she cannot tell *how* she got there, it is certainly very desirable she should know. It will hardly be contended, even by those who are most inclined to worship, that it was by the aid of divinity within her; and those who are the least so disposed will scarcely venture to ascribe it to blunder. And if it really was done step by step, as we clumsy mortals have to climb, then it were well, certainly, for the sake of companionship, if nothing else, that she should learn to take one step at a time. Such leaping or hopping propensity,

belonging as it does to instinct, rather than reason, we must confess we consider to be a defect rather than an excellence; and that it calls for special attention in her education. It will not do, in any country where woman is the companion rather than the slave of man, to maintain that it is not important that she should know how to think, reflect, reason, and judge. And if there be less aptitude or disposition, naturally, for these modes of mental activity, its correction demands the more attention from the teacher. He should be the more constantly vigilant for *occasions*, in all her studies, for calling the reasoning powers into exercise. He should be the more constantly putting her on the *why?* and the *wherefore?* and calling for the *rationes et causas rerum*, in what she studies. The mere *memory*-system of teaching,—the tasking of a single fa-

culty rather, without teaching at all, which has ever been the besetting sin of teachers,—is, therefore, most unsuitable and injurious in the education of females.

Considering the peculiar dangers to which they are to be exposed in taking positions in life, the value of the relations they are to sustain, and the importance of the influence they are to exert; it is certainly of the greatest moment that the reason and judgment should be educated to habits of cool, deliberate investigation; and raised to the most perfect mastery over the impulsive elements of their nature, which skill and assiduity can give.

Nor are the occasions and means for this sort of culture so limited in the occupations of the class-room as some suppose. When studies for cultivating the reasoning powers are spoken of, they think of Euclid, and Lacroix;

they think of Butler's Analogy perhaps, or of Logic : studies that are not introduced to the attention of a young lady till she is on the verge of womanhood, and on the verge of leaving school. And if these are the only studies which can be employed for developing and strengthening the reasoning faculty, then must she indeed, in nine cases in ten, go forth without that culture : for they are certainly not studies suitable for childhood.

It is, however, a very great mistake to suppose that the studies which are adapted to childhood are not suited to the cultivation of the reasoning faculty. There is not one of them,—not even the mechanical art of penmanship,—that may not be made to minister to this purpose. The study of language, whether dead or living, foreign or vernacular, is admirably suited to the purpose, even for very young minds.

The writer once took a little girl, between six and seven years old, with whom he made the experiment by instruction in English Grammar; and, after giving her the definitions of the parts of speech, and the rules of the regular construction of the language,—both carefully freed from looseness and ambiguity of expression,—which she committed perfectly to memory,—he set her to parsing; never correcting her mistakes himself, but requiring her to do it by bringing every thing to the test of her rules and definitions. The experiment satisfied him that the reasoning faculty may be, as successfully developed, and as rapidly developed at that early age as at any other; and that no study is more happily adapted to the object than the study of English Grammar, when pursued as it ought to be. Arithmetic, also, especially under the improved

forms of analysis in which it is now prepared, may be an efficient instrument for the same purpose. The study of some other than the vernacular tongue, is also well adapted to this object when it is pursued under the instruction of a teacher who has an interest in the improvement of his pupils, and the skill to excite and direct inquiry into the philosophy of language. It is on this account, especially, that I would recommend a more general attention to the ancient languages in female schools, rather than for the aid they give in the cultivation of the taste, or the door they open to stores of knowledge.

We pass to consider,

3dly. Whether woman has any distinctive characteristics in her *moral* nature, which require to be considered in her education, and which call for a

modification of that which would be appropriate to the other sex.

As an accountable and immortal being, the principles, the duties, and the affections of piety, should certainly constitute a part of her education.

But *what* part or proportion, and in what manner applied or elicited, as compared with the care bestowed in this respect on the other sex, ought to depend on her comparative aptitude, or otherwise, for these affections and duties. That woman is *less* inclined to *infidelity* than man, and that she is *more susceptible* in her religious sensibilities than man, are facts which should not be overlooked in the mode and measure of her religious education. The very fact of her possessing a proclivity to religious faith, and finer sensibility than the other sex, not only supersedes the necessity—if necessity could in any case be supposed to exist

—for any mechanism of human device for the purpose of giving intensity to her religious development; but calls for the utmost care for the exclusion of it.

If it can be taken for granted that the simply scriptural means of the development of the religious element are sufficient at all, it certainly should be taken for granted in the case of the tender sex; and that especially in their tender years. The artificial soil of a hot-bed, the unnatural air of a hothouse, with artificial stimulating waters of irrigation, and unnatural light through stained or painted media, would not be recommended in horticulture, for a plant that might have its native soil and native air, with heaven's own unperturbed light, and strike its roots by fountains of living waters: nor can we expect the flavor from its fruit which its nature is adapted to produce.

To drop the figure. That religious character in woman which is in harmony with the sphere in which her Creator designed her to move, is best developed, with His blessing, by simple Bible truth applied to the understanding, to the conscience, and the affections, in the same natural, matter-of-course way in which other truths and duties are presented: always taking care to give it the pre-eminence which its importance demands.

The religious education should thus begin with the education of the understanding. The reasons of faith should be given to the understanding, as it is able to receive them, and as soon as it is able to receive them. The laws of religion should be laid on the conscience, and its motives applied to the affections, amid the every-day duties and scenes of life: as having inseparable connexions with them, and as form-

ing a part of the very necessities of human nature.

It is in this way only, as we humbly conceive, that education can possibly develope a religious character which shall be, at the same time, rational, without being heartless,—and devout, without being superstitious.

In what we say, it will be perceived, we take it for granted, that the truths of the *Bible* are sufficient for the development of religious character. We do so, because the promise of God has been given, that his blessing shall attend them. “As the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater; so shall *my word* be that goeth forth out of my mouth: *it shall not return unto me void.*”

The truth of God—the truth which

He himself has, “at sundry times and in divers manners,” spoken by the prophets, by his Son, and by the apostles,—is the only divinely authorized, the only efficient, the only safe, the only possible appliance for the development of a religious character without injury to the intellect, or the conscience, or the affections, or the morals. The Scripture which is given by inspiration of God, and that *only*, is “profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, so that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works:”—or, in other words, may be fitted or adapted to the duties and destinies for which God designed him.

But we are speaking particularly of the religious education of the female sex. And, as we are speaking of education considered as committed to the professed teacher in the seminary, it is

a question of practical importance for us to consider, What ought to be done in this behalf by the educator; and, especially in the case of those whose religious interests are suffering though early neglect?

It would take up more of our time than is compatible with the accomplishment of our object, on the present occasion, to give our views fully on this question. In conformity with what has already been said, however, it may be anticipated, that we should not favor a system of urgency, stress, and violence, to remedy the evils of such neglect; that we should employ *nothing but religious* TRUTH for the purpose; that we should give her, in connexion with the instructions of science and literature, a knowledge of the fundamental truths of religion: of the character of God; of her relation to Him; of her immortality; of her accountability; and of the

ground of hope, and the motives to the affections and duties of piety which the gospel gives ; and that we should rely much on the influence of a genial religious atmosphere surrounding the pupil, to give those truths the effects desired. They may not, indeed, spring up suddenly into fruit. But, if the soil, so to speak,—the soil of the understanding and the heart, the sentiments and affections,—be cultivated and attended to with due care, experience, confirming theory, has taught us to expect with confidence, favorable and happy results. The mind of woman, thus brought as it were, into the presence of God, and into the view of its immortality, and left free, and made to feel its responsibility ; and realizing, as it belongs peculiarly to the sex to realize, its need of the love and the strength which are attainable only from piety, may be expected, with great confidence, to yield itself to God.

If it does not, if it *will* not, with *such* discipline, we confess ourselves to have no faith in any other.

We have said, that the education of woman should be in harmony with her *sex*.

To give this remark significancy, suppose you were to put her into the classes, and under the regimen of our colleges ; or, to the studies and the evolutions of the military art ; or, require her to study, for the sake of thorough accomplishment, the theory and practice of surgery ; or that of physiology, pursued into the details of anatomy—knife in hand—in the dissecting-room.

These are useful and necessary branches of knowledge ; and *men* pursue and practise them as in harmony with their nature, and belonging to their sphere. When woman appears in them, however, we feel that she is out of her

place. And the more conspicuous she may appear, and the more she may shine in the lustre of her acquisitions, the more do the charms of womanhood suffer an eclipse. They may compel us to admire, but they will not incline us to love.

Character, as the product of education, is partly the result of the knowledge acquired; partly the result of the notions, opinions, sentiments formed; and in part the result of the aspirations fostered. When we say that the education of woman should be in harmony with her sex, we mean that the knowledge imparted, the sentiments formed, and the aspirations fostered, should all be appropriate to female character.

She should not be so educated as to make her ambitious of plucking the laurels of war, or shining in public debate; nor should she be educated to

any sentiments or aspirations which conflict with her destined relations to life. God has made her a woman, and not a man; and He has assigned her position: and her education ought to be so conducted that she shall feel it to be for her interest and her happiness, most comprehensively considered, to occupy that position. And any instruction or discipline appealing either to her physical, intellectual, or moral nature, which would make her unhappy in taking that position, or lead her to feel that she would be more happy, or more acceptable to her Maker, in taking any other; we regard as not only a wrong done to society and to the individual, but a crime against nature, and a reproach to nature's God. He made her neither to be above man nor below him; to be neither his ruler nor his slave; nor did He make her to be an anchoress,—too holy to be associated

with him; but he made her to be his companion—"an *help-meet* for him"—in the domestic sphere. That sphere to her is the sphere of wife and mother. Her education also should be in harmony with that sphere, and it should tend to fit her for it. It should aim to make her such a woman as, without any remodeling and recasting, may fill and adorn that niche in the social structure, when the fortunes of her life may place her there.

And do you ask what we consider education has to do with making a good wife and mother? You will, perhaps, say that this matter belongs rather to the domestic sphere than to the school. There is certainly much force in the remark. And what is so often said—that a good wife must be sought where the domestic influences are what they ought to be, and is seldom to be found where they are defective, is

mainly true. A daughter who has been reared in habits of indolence, or selfishness, or self-indulgence, or disorder, for example, is very apt to carry these evils, from the family in which she was reared, into the family of which she is to be the head. And there is no certain and effectual remedy for them, perhaps, by teachers, in cases where domestic influences had been in the wrong direction from the cradle, and are still counterworking their endeavors. And so, on the other hand, where the influences have been what they ought to be, much may be expected from them to supersede the necessity of the constant vigilance and earnest exertion called for in the former cases.

Still, it is to be remembered, that the pupil is in the formative process throughout the period of her education; that habits injurious or unsuitable are easily fallen into, through mere inatten-

tion,—“*facilis descensus Averni* ;” and that constant care—especially in the Boarding School—and constant admonitions are therefore necessary even to secure the confirmation of those correct habits, the foundations of which were laid in early domestic precept and example.

We maintain, therefore, that instructions on topics of this sort, are really among the most important to a young lady's prospects that can be given. And I am the more disposed to insist on this, because the importance of correct habits and right notions to the young lady, *in advance* of her entrance into married life, is not properly appreciated, even by those who have the inestimable treasure of these habits to carry forward with them ; and least of all, by those who most need it. With a very large class of young ladies the great question is, How to catch a hus-

band—not, How to keep him. They do not consider, that though the first question is an important one, the latter is more so. There are many things that are excellent *as bait*, that are good for nothing *as ties*. A fine form, a beautiful face, a graceful carriage, a sweet smile, are good things; a good understanding and a well stored mind are still better. But if the former be rendered *unsightly*, it will be both a bitterness and a mortification to the husband, to call to mind the beauty that captivated the lover. Grant that love is blind to blemishes that are plain to other eyes, it cannot endure a cheat. And the young lady who is always what she ought to be, when visible to her husband, *before* marriage, and never afterwards, will find no amount of beauty, and no amount of intelligence sufficient to retain the heart which was won by hypocrisy.

However crazy a man may be when in love, he comes to his senses after he is married ; and he will then esteem the qualities of his wife very much as other people do.

“ Those clouds that shade your blooming face
 A little water might displace.
 Those tresses, as the raven black,
 That waved in ringlets down your back,
 Uncombed, uninjured, by neglect
 Destroy the face which once they deck’d.
 Whence this forgetfulness of dress ?
 But,—ah ! you’re married, madam :—‘ *Yes !* ’ ”

We lay down the position, then, in concluding this part of our subject, that it should be a prominent part of female education to give right ideas of what a wife and mother ought to be ; and to form those habits of industry, economy, punctuality, order, and neatness, and cultivate those affections and tempers, on which the happiness of the domestic sphere depends.

All that we have thus far said, we consider as true and important in relation to woman *every where*.

It remains for us to speak of what we consider important in the education of *American* females especially.

Although education, so far as it respects the development of the faculties of the mind, and so far as it respects the domestic relations, ought to be the same every where, because the laws of mind are universal, and because the domestic relations are universal; yet, so far as it respects opinions, tastes, sympathies, and intellectual furniture, it should be conducted with regard to the national and social relations of the individual. In other lands where one is born to rule, and another to obey; where one is born to the leisure and the temptations of wealth; and another to poverty and toil, by a destiny which no elements of personal character suf-

fice to change; a Fenelon or a More may give sound instruction which is impertinent to common ears. But in a country which knows no majesty, but that of God and virtue; which acknowledges no aristocracy, but that of intellect; which enjoys the unparalleled privilege of pursuing, unbiassed and unimpeded, the great objects of human existence; *here*, education should be strictly and fully conformed to the nature and destiny of man as a moral, intellectual, and immortal being: developing and strengthening every faculty, in every class of the community; and preparing every individual, to the utmost extent of which he is capable, for the career of dignity, usefulness, and happiness, which is open before him.

This proposition with respect to the stronger sex, has long been admitted, and often insisted on.

But with respect to female education,

I lament to say, that, among the more wealthy portion of the community, it has been virtually denied. In alarmingly numerous instances, it has been abandoned to all the perversion which an infatuated partiality for every thing that is foreign could devise. And, for the general mass of humbler life, a few simple elements have been thought sufficient. And the work of imparting these has too often been committed to persons altogether inadequate to the requisitions of the American destiny. While the subject of a liberal education for our *sons*, has been made one of the most prominent topics of interest; while those who have given directions and tone to public sentiment have been free in the expenditure of their private resources in individual benefactions, and free in the bestowment of public funds by legislative grants, for the erection and endowment of academies,

lyceums, manual labor schools, gymnasiums, colleges and universities; while we have consecrated, without scruple, to the business of instruction in them, the most exalted intellects of our country; while we have been eager in the adoption of every improvement in the sciences, or in the mode of teaching them, which the investigations of either continent have brought to light; and have, without hesitation, carried our pupils up through the loftiest regions of the abstract sciences; and have thought no science amiss, and no time amiss, and no expense amiss, that might discipline and ennoble *their* minds, and fit them to act well *their* part as members of this growing Republic;—while we have done all this *for our sons*, what have we done—until within a very few years—for our daughters? Why, we have *allowed* to be established, in and around our

cities* and large towns, day schools and boarding schools, by individual enterprise; to be conducted on any system or principle which any proprietor, possessing any grade of capacity or qualification, might choose to adopt; or, without any system or principle at all. And we have allowed all, who chose, to enter the profession of teachers of females, only taking the liberty, like true republicans, to show our preference for what was foreign. And we have allowed our daughters—the sisters of our collegians—to go and learn what might chance to be taught; making what choice they pleased, both of schools and of studies, and, in most instances,—especially in the fashionable circles of our cities, where wealth is at once a power and a peril requiring the guides and safeguards of a thorough training,—we have allowed them to remain till they were

old enough to *begin* to *comprehend* what was taught; and then we have allowed them to “turn out,” to be the arbitresses of our domestic happiness, and of our national character.

The consequences of this penurious and insensate partiality have been such as might be expected. The sphere of instruction, for the better half of society, which *ought* to be filled by the first talent in our country, has been filled, in fact, even for some of our principal cities, and most influential portions of our population, with every thing which has chosen to enter it. Hence we have had female seminaries conducted by professional men as mere secondary objects of their attention; by professional men who had not talent to succeed in the professions to which they were bred; but who, we have thought, though they had not wit enough to be entrusted with the care of our souls,

bodies, or estates, "would do" to teach our daughters; by men who have been educated as merchants, or mechanics; and by females whom misfortune has struck from the sphere of wealth, and compelled, not only unwilling but unskilled, to teach for bread.

In the competition which has been awakened for patronage, the want of a proper care and a just discrimination, on the part of the public, has stimulated the hopes of the undeserving; appeals have been made to cupidity, to pride, and to indulgence; and discipline has been sacrificed to favor. And thus, not unfrequently have we seen the unprincipled pretender flooded with patronage, while the truly meritorious have had the mortification of having their competency overlooked, and their fidelity disregarded: and have been obliged, either to descend into competition with all the ignorance, stupidity,

and importunity which surrounded them ; or, to abandon a sphere of action, on the proper occupancy of which depend the character and prosperity of their country.

* Evils, it is said, work their own cure. But sometimes one evil only makes way for another. And so it has been in this case. The deficiencies of our means of education have been seen by a class of men renowned in the old world for their skill in training the young to their own purposes ; who are ever willing to teach wherever they may control ; and who, sustained by the gold of a foreign spiritual despotism, are willing to make every provision for the education of our daughters, for no other reward than the surrender of our civil and religious freedom !

* This passage on Romanist schools was not delivered at the Smith. Inst.

To meet these deficiencies the choicest sites have been selected ; and beautiful edifices are rising all over our land : and teachers, trained behind the grates of European convents to a blind submission both to civil and ecclesiastical tyranny, and an abhorrence of the principles both of our religion and our government, are already occupying these enchanting retreats ; and smiling most winningly from their portals on the descendants of the Huguenots, of the Puritans, and of the martyrs of Smith-field !*

* The occasional discussions between the fiery and the more politic sections of the Catholic Church, bring out revelations which are carefully kept back under ordinary circumstances. The *Shepherd of the Valley*, a Catholic paper of St. Louis, has been called to account by the Catholic *Herald* for its incautious avowal of Catholic principles in their application to this country. The *Shepherd of the Valley* replies to the *Herald*. The way in which this "Shepherd" would butcher the Protestant flock, is set forth in this extract on the doctrine of "toleration :"

And the lure has taken effect. And why should it not? It is foreign; it is novel; it is "*economical*;" and it

"Well, then, is this doctrine of toleration a Christian doctrine, or is it not? does it come from heaven, or hell; from God, or the Devil? do we see any thing of it in the Bible, in the Fathers, in the actions or writings of the saints, in the treatises of the doctors of the Church? was it heard of before the birth of Protestantism? has it not been condemned by the Council of Constance, and repeatedly by the Supreme Pontiffs? is it any thing more than a convenient theory, got up that Catholics living amongst Protestants may meet with less ill-will? are not the French philosophers and their disciples its most zealous advocates? is not Gibbon full of it? has it ever had any thing more than a theoretical existence, except where it has been practically impossible to carry into active operation the principles which it condemns? was St. Thomas right when he said, that 'it is a much worse thing to corrupt the faith, by which life is given to the soul, than to falsify money, which is an assistance to the temporal life?' did he reason correctly from these premises when he argued that temporal princes might justly punish convicted heretics? *may we not expect the Church and Christian rulers to act again as they have acted? is it not our boast that THE CHURCH NEVER CHANGES*, and is not her history an open book,

gives us an occasion to show our liberality !

But, my countrymen ! Fathers and mothers of America ! Children of men

which all may read, which we cannot close if we would, and of which we are accustomed to say that we have no cause to be ashamed ?

“ We will say, however, that we are not in favor of roasting heretics, and that, if this sort of work is to be revived—though in our miserable times it is quite impossible, since men have no belief which they care to propagate, or for which they dare endure—if persecution is to be renewed, we should rather be its victims than its agents ; but we are not, therefore, going to deny the facts of history, or to blame the saints of God and the doctors and pastors of the Church for what they have done and sanctioned. We say that the temporal punishment of heresy is a mere question of expediency ; that Protestants do not persecute us here, simply because they have not the power ; and that *where we abstain from persecuting them they are well aware that it is merely because we cannot do so, or think that, by doing so, we should injure the cause that we wish to serve.*”—*N. Y. Recorder*, May 12, 1852.

Sacred God ! is *this* thy gospel ? and are these the principles in which so many of our public men seem anxious to have the future mothers of this country educated ?

who fled ~~from~~ the prison, the gibbet and the stake, to savage wilds for the enjoyment of religious liberty; and to give life and freedom to you! how can you esteem *so lightly* your blood-bought birthright as to fling it back into the very jaws of the seven-headed beast from which it was saved by their voluntary exile? Nay, rather, why will you beckon to the very refuge they gave you the unchangeably remorseless power from which they fled; and commit your tender offspring to its care?

Mysterious infatuation! worse than pagan cruelty! Christian parents causing their children to pass through the fire to a Moloch, whose acceptable offerings are "*slaves and souls of men!*" Rev. xviii. 13.

The Hindoo mother, ignorant of the living God, devotes her helpless babe to the jaws of the crocodile: a moment of anguish, one piercing shriek, and all

is over. On *her* part, it ~~was~~ the religious oblation of a benighted mind: and the child has passed from the troubled waters of the Ganges to the calm of heaven. But you deliver up your child to influences that may unfit her for the duties and enjoyments of the present life; that may lead her to a refuge of lies for her religious trust; that may rob her of a “good hope through grace” in a dying hour, and of “everlasting consolation” in the life to come.

What commendation does not such a procedure deserve! What wonderful *patriotism* does it evince! A republican parent, you commit the hope of your country to the moulding hands of the passive minions of a despotic foreign power! What admirable *consistency*:—prizing religious liberty yourself above all price, you commit your child to the instruction of those who teach that, in

matters of religion, the exercise of private judgment is a sin!

What tender *affection*! Grasping the Bible, as the lamp of life for your own path, you select for your teachers those who will withhold it from your child.

What praiseworthy adherence to religious *principle*! Blessed with the light of the ever glorious Reformation, you expose your daughter to the proselytism of the power which, in its efforts to quench that light, drenched Europe in blood.

What confiding *charity*! Denounced as a heretic yourself, you commit your child to the care of those who tell you they keep no faith with heretics.

And what shall we say of that *mercy*, which, after having learned from God's own word that it is "not by works of righteousness that we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us;" that there is but "one Mediator be-

tween God and man, the man Christ Jesus;" and that "by deeds of law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight;" places a young immortal, the child of its own bosom, and that too in the season of its tenderest susceptibilities, under the instructions of those who surround their devotions with the most fascinating and imposing splendor, but who worship* a woman as the Queen of heaven; trust to their works of penance and mortification for their ac-

* PRINCELY PRESENTS BY THE QUEEN OF SPAIN.—Queen Isabella of Spain has given to the image of "Our Lady of Atocha" an imperial crown of fine gold set with diamonds and Brazilian topazes, the whole worth \$750,000; to the image of the Saviour, at the same shrine, a similar crown, though of course smaller in size; and two bouquets of the size of a man's hand, of pure diamonds. For these things, the Queen paid the jeweller Lovia the enormous sum of \$1,500,000. The statues have been adorned with them and placed on an altar where the public can see them; four soldiers constantly keep guard before the shrine.—*May* 12, 1852.

ceptance with God; and rely on the intercession of saints and martyrs; and who will tell her that there is no salvation for her without obedience to human tradition, submission to papal authority, and communion with Rome!

Thank Heaven, that the eyes of our people are beginning to open to this absurd folly and unnatural sin.

Yet we confess that we are not without our fear that a misjudging reliance on the increase of light and on the transforming influence of our free institutions may yet betray—as, to some extent, it already has done—a portion of the more wealthy and worldly of our citizens into an encouragement of further experiments on the credulity and forbearance of American Protestantism.

It is agreeable to the best feelings of our nature to exercise liberality, and it is ungracious to distrust professions of friendship. But we should at least

recollect, and *credit* Rome's own professions. Her system is unchangeable: and the saying of one of her own *pagan* bards might fitly become the motto of her *Christian* escutcheon:

“Coelum, non animum mutant qui *trans mare*
eurrunt.”

She will be the same in the new world that she has been in the old: and though she may coquette with our democracy, she will never wed with our freedom. It is preposterous, therefore, to suppose that, if entrusted with the education of the future arbitresses of our national destiny, she will foster the freeborn genius either of our religion or government.

While I am on this subject of our national follies in this matter of American female education, I may as well finish my tribute to them, by referring

to another evil of serious and threatening magnitude, as to the *character* of the education which is gaining favor with the wealthier portion of our citizens, and in our cities especially: I mean a fondness for French—French language, French teachers, and French manners. And nothing will answer, therefore, but French schools.

I would not be thought to sympathize altogether with the stern spirit of the Roman censor, who, in his fear that the learning and luxury of Greece would destroy the valor and simplicity of the Romans, carried his antipathy to whatever was Grecian so far as to oppose the teaching of her language. But I do confess I feel myself more inclined to approve than to condemn his conduct in relation to her philosophy.

It is related that, during the censorship of Cato, there arrived at Rome

two ambassadors from Athens; both of them teachers of Grecian philosophy: Carneades the academician, and Diogenes the stoic. The distinguishing tenet of the former was universal scepticism; and that of the latter, universal indifference.

The Roman youth beheld and heard them with wonder and delight. Especially were they charmed with the eloquence, and the graceful manners of the sceptic, who drew around him an auditory of the politest persons in Rome. The report spread through the city that "there was come from Greece a man of astonishing powers. In a public discourse, he had given an accurate and judicious dissertation *upon justice*: but, in another speech, confuted all the arguments he had advanced; and apparently gave no existence to the virtue he had so much commended."

The youth, captivated by his eloquence, forgot all their pleasures and diversions, and ran mad after philosophy.

And the Romans were quite delighted to have it so. But the aged Censor, alarmed, the historian tells us, for the influence of such philosophy over the rising generation, hastened to the Senate, and complained of the magistrates for detaining so long such ambassadors as those, who could persuade the people to whatever they pleased. And, closing with all possible despatch the business of their embassy, he dismissed them from the country. To dissuade his own son from such studies, he remarked, in a tone at once oracular and prophetic, that "*When the Romans came thoroughly to imbibe the Grecian literature, they would lose the empire of the world.*" In relation to this prediction, Plutarch,—himself a

Greek, at the head of a school at Rome,—observes, that “time has shown the vanity of that invidious assertion: for Rome was never at a higher pitch of greatness than when she was most perfect in the Grecian erudition.”

But his translator, in a note on this assertion, has more wisely and truly remarked, that “Rome had, indeed, a very extensive empire in the Augustan age: but, at the same time, *she lost her ancient CONSTITUTION, and her LIBERTY.* Not that the *learning* of the Romans contributed to that loss, but their *irreligion*; their *luxury*, and their *corruption*,” which had been imported from her polished neighbors.

That this irreligion, luxury, and corruption was the fruit of the philosophy she received from them, history has abundantly shown.

And, if the lessons of history were

more efficacious than they have been, in giving wisdom, we should have less fear of this inordinate fondness for whatever is French. But it is a law that sways the moral world as well as the natural—that, like causes produce like effects. That which you present to your daughter as a paragon, it is vain for you to deny her as an example. If you teach her that, in order to be a perfect lady, she must read French literature, copy French manners, and follow French fashions; and that, after all that France can do for her on this side the water, she must, if she would be “perfect and entire, wanting nothing,” go and take a seasoning from the atmosphere of Paris;—if you can do all this, and yet expect her to possess the principles, predilections, and virtues, which should characterize the American wife and mother; then you must expect what never yet has

been; and *never will be*, till nature has so changed that men may gather grapes from thorns, and figs from thistles.

What are the requisites of an American female education? Granting the utmost that may be demanded for refinement—for taste and skill in the arts; for ease and grace of manners; there still remains to be supplied the whole pith and substance of the moral and the national character. A knowledge and love of her duties to her God; a knowledge and love of her country, and its institutions; the knowledge of domestic duties; and the culture of the domestic affections, with habits of sober thought and practical common sense;—these, whatever else may be necessary or desirable, are indispensable requisites of the education of those who would properly fill the place of American wives and mothers.

And are these necessary features of American character to be best attained by casting the precious material of our country's hope in the mould of Paris? Are we, as a people, *unable* to supply our own wants? Is it beyond our power to find, or to rear instructors, of American birth and feeling, for our daughters; and are we reduced to the necessity of patronizing, and, by submitting to the most extravagant charges, of *encouraging* the establishment of schools by foreigners to do the work of American education?

Is it because our daughters will better acquire a knowledge of their Creator from a people who have denied his existence; and better learn to revere his name in schools where they hear that name perpetually repeated as an unmeaning expletive of fashionable chit-chat?

We wish to have them virtuous:

must we therefore have them taught morality by a people with whom the marriage tie is a chord of gossamer; virtue, a jest; and libertinism, gallantry!

We wish them to be pious and intelligent: must we therefore commit them to the care of those whose religion is a bloody formalism; and whose philosophy is atheistic?

We wish to have them taught to appreciate the sufferings, wisdom, and heroic piety of our fathers, whose virtues were the basis of our national freedom and happiness: and we expect it to be done by those who have been born and bred under the influence of a government and a religion at least as hostile to the distinguishing traits of character of those fathers, as were the government and religion which exiled them!

We wish to inspire them with the

love of rational liberty, republican simplicity, and religious tolerance : we, therefore commit them to the tutelage of the disciples of Voltaire and Diderot ; the worshipers of Napoleon ; and the missionaries of the Propaganda !

We wish them rightly to estimate the dignity and importance of the *domestic* sphere of woman ; and to understand and love the sober duties and quiet pleasures of home : and we therefore place them under the care of a people who are proverbially strangers to the joys of the family fireside ; and who, in their love of tumultuous excitement, feel most at home when abroad, in the café, the opera, and the theatre.

It is through the operation of such notions and practices as I have animadverted upon that the moral sensitiveness, which once characterized our people, has been wearing away from the higher classes of this country.

In *religion*, the simplicity which once distinguished them is giving place to the ceremonies and parade which form the most convenient substitute for vital piety. In *morals*, licentiousness, instead of being looked upon with abhorrence as a sin against God, and a crime to be punished by the laws, has become the besetting sin of wealth and fashion.

In the *family*, the knowledge of domestic affairs is coming to be regarded as vulgar. Habits of indolence and extravagance, in the one sex, are at once deterring the other from entering into the married state, and aggravating the evils of licentiousness and prodigality among them. The love of excitement is filling the land with a polluted literature. The love of indulgence is filling our cities with every species of temptation: with houses for intemperance and gluttony; with oyster saloons for ladies; confectioneries for children;

with gambling-houses for the ruin of the heirs of wealth and fashion; and with houses of assignation for the ruin of the daughters of poverty.

It is but too evident that a deadly disease has seized on the vitals of the nation. The health of our republican simplicity and ancestral virtue is fading away: and, without an early application of some powerful remedy, the day is not distant when every vice that riots in the rotten nations of the old world will find a secure and quiet home in this.

What then is the remedy? We answer, a truly American female education! As we have stated in the outset of this lecture, woman is not only the index, but the arbitress of national character and destiny. *She*—not your politician—holds the fate of our country! Let our male population grow up without such influences as woman only can

bring to bear, in their childhood and youth, and then let her be unfitted to influence them to the right, *afterwards*, and it is neither masculine wisdom nor masculine prowess that can save our country from corruption, dissension, strife, anarchy, and blood.

Let all who love their country and its institutions bear in mind, then, the stake which is at issue; and see to it that they give their influence in the right direction. Let us have *American* schools for the education of Americans; and *American principles* taught, and an *American spirit* cherished in them. Give to female education its relative importance. *Raise it to the dignity* of a NATIONAL INTEREST: let schools for the education of the sex be so organized and so multiplied that all may have it in their power to receive their benefits. Let corporate action and individual liberality emulate each other in pro-

viding, in all parts of our country, for the most thorough and extensive education which is appropriate to the sex. Let the schools occupy the choicest locations, as to healthfulness and beauty of scenery. Let them have the most ample means for physical as well as mental and moral education. Let the course of studies, the instructions, and discipline, be national—religious—social—domestic : national, without being clownish; religious, without being sectarian ; social, not exclusive. And throw their portals wide and free to all who wish to enter them.

And when you have provided the *means* of an education adequate to our national exigences, your next care should be for suitable *teachers*.

Do not commit the formation of American female character to any thing and every thing that may be willing to undertake the work. It is *worthy* of

the best talent of the land ; and its proper execution demands not only talent and science, but the most enlightened piety and the truest patriotism.

Education does not consist in enjoining a task and hearing a lesson. When done to any purpose, it brings mind into pressure upon mind, and heart upon heart : and the pupil, like the Iceland crystal, for ever shows the double image—the type of his own individuality blended with that of his master. *No one can, with safety, be entrusted with the formation of the youthful mind, in this country, either whose religious convictions or whose political sympathies are not in harmony with the great principles of our constitution.*

The people of all lands are among us,—or are *coming*. And we bid them welcome to share with us the blessings we enjoy : welcome to our land ; welcome to our freedom, civil and

religious ; and welcome to all the benefits of our means and facilities of education.

But, in the name of sacred Liberty, let that suffice. Or if, in the exercise of the freedom to which the genius of our country welcomes to the rights of citizenship the people of every religion and clime, they *will* segregate their own youth ; and educate them as, for their own sake and for our country's sake, we would not have them educated ; in Freedom's name, we say again, let that suffice. Or, if it be necessary, from our social or commercial relations, to make their languages a part of the course of studies in American schools, by all means let it be done by those who can do it most effectually. Whatever is *necessary* to be done,—whether it be instruction in the French, on the *Atlantic* slope, or the Chinese, on the *Pacific*,—let it be done by those

who can do it best. But, if our fathers did wisely by demanding an avowed attachment to their periled liberty from those whom they put at the head of their armies; if they demanded a sworn allegiance to our institutions from those who fill the offices of State; and even required American birth from those entrusted with the *highest*; how much more should we be careful as to the principles and the sympathies of those who are to give form and direction to the minds and manners of our rising generations: and especially of the sex whose influence must determine our national character.

With the views I entertain, then, of the exigences of our country, and the philosophy of educational influences, were I a Committee of Examination, I would take the Bible in one hand and the Constitution in the other; and, approaching the candidate for the high

and holy trust, I would say to him :
“ These are the pillars of our temple of freedom : Do you accept them ? Do you love them ? Will you teach them ? Will you imbue these daughters of America with their principles ? Will you cherish in them the freeborn spirit ? Will you teach them to *think*, and *reason*, and *judge*, and *search* for *truth* ? Will you teach them to esteem intelligence above wealth ; to look more upon worth than station ; to frown on vice though high, and to reverence virtue though humble ? Will you teach them the science and the art of *self*-government ? Will you inspire them with reverence for law ; for God and truth ; with a love for their country, for its institutions, its history, and its treasured names ? ” And, when I had obtained a hearty affirmative to these questions, and not till then, would I examine his credentials as to his com-

petency in the *divine science*, and his fitness for the *noble art* of teaching.

I have thus, fellow-citizens, stated what I consider as some of the more prominent wants of American female education; and some of the errors which we are committing in regard to it.

There are two other errors which must be corrected before female education can do for the country what its welfare demands.

If the views we have presented be correct, the office of teacher and director of female education calls for an order of talent, and a degree of acquirements, second to none in the service of the public. But, until that office is *better rewarded*, and *more honored*, it will be rather shunned than sought by the grade of talent which it needs.

The other error is, the early removal

of young ladies from school. And it is an error so great and so fatal that, if our schools and our teachers were every thing we could wish them to be, it would still be impossible, as a general thing, to develope, form, and strengthen their character as the exigences of their position in life require, at an age so young as that in which fashion calls young ladies away from their studies.

But I have too long detained you, and must close.

It is in the power—it is *now* in the power—of the mothers of this country, to regenerate and save it. Nay, it is in the power of a comparatively small portion of them to do it. It is the *elite*, in all countries, that give tone to thought, and feeling, manners, and morals: and it is pre-eminently in their power to do it, by a right example, in *this* country where hereditary distinctions interpose

no barrier to the sympathies, where wealth is an accredited source of power; where the hope of it is a universal stimulus; and where the richest and the poorest are every where bound together by the ties of blood.

Let me say, in concluding, to my fair countrywomen: You hold in your hands the destinies of the most glorious land on earth. In spite of the wisdom of Senates, in spite of the prowess of the battle-field, *it is yours* to decide the question of the permanency of its institutions.

It is yours to mould the mind of man; to form his tastes; to control his pleasures; to win him from his dangers; to strengthen his virtues; and, when "blind ambition downward pours for that which shines above," to direct his *aspirations* "to substantial happiness and true renown."

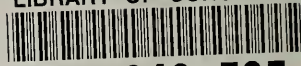
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